are inevitable orf restoration of derations, it should be restricted crop or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to area not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.

(ii) To consider banning of felling in the hills above 1,000 metres, at least for some years.

(iii) To identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous afforestation.

(iv) To set apart 4 per cent of the geographical area as protection area like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, biosphere reserve etc.

(v) Special guidelines have been issued for protection of forests from forest fires.

Development of waste land

499. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the steps taken by Government for the development of waste-land treeplantation, afforestation, reduction of soil erosion, etc., during the last four months;

(b) whether any efforts have been made to involve various State Governments in these programmes;

(c) whether Government have called any meeting of various State Environment Ministers to discuss such issues; and

(d) what are the plans for the future with a view to give an impetus to such aspects of environment protection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NTAH): (a) and (b) The Wastelands Development Programme including afforestation and tree planting activities, has been implemented with renewed vigour during the last four months, mainly through the State Governments, which have been advised to strengthen the monitoring mechanism and ensure improved results.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Wastelands Development Programme is proposed to be greatly expanded during the Eighth Five Year Plan, which is under finalisation.

Felling of trees in Madhya Pradesh

500. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more than 15000 trees were felled illegally in the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh during the last six months;

(b) whether Government are also aware that many gangs of racketeers are active in illegal faling lof trees throughout the State of Madhya Pradesh; and

(c) if so, what action Government propose to take to save the trees from being felled unauthorisedly there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per reports received from the State Government there is no evidence that many gangs of racketeers are active in illegal felling of trees throughout the State of Madhya Pradesh.